

A. Introduction

eBOUND Canada is a not-for-profit corporation, originally known as Canadian Publishers Digital Services, and created by independent Canadian publishers in 2008 to support them in adjusting to the shift to digital content delivery. Incorporated as eBOUND Canada in 2011, eBOUND is owned by the Association of Canadian Publishers with a mandate to support their members in all of their digital publishing activities.

Publishers had long since moved to digital production workflows and the typesetting and offset film industries that once produced their books have disappeared. The requirement to deliver the books they publish in both print and digital formats has brought a new set of challenges to publishers who now operate parallel businesses delivering their authors' work to readers in both formats--usually through different retail channels. Most small publishers do not have the resources to manage both of these businesses internally and that is where eBOUND fits in. We work with over seventy independent Canadian publishers to support them in whatever area of digital content production or distribution they require. Over eighty per cent of Canadian publishers that outsource some part of their ebook distribution use eBOUND.¹

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to Minister Mélanie Joly's current consultations and look forward to working with Heritage staff to ensure that ebooks by Canadian authors, produced by independent Canadian publishers, continue to reach readers in Canada and around the world.

B. Building a cultural system that supports creators and respects citizen choice

The support of the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canada Book Fund has been essential to fostering and maintaining an independent Canadian publishing industry. It is this sector of the industry that produces eighty percent of the new works published by Canadian authors each year and provides Canadian readers with a wealth of stories that reflect our culture. Because Canadian publishers compete with books from multinational publishers who enjoy significant economies of scale, this ongoing support is essential to help level the playing field and ensure a broad selection of Canadian stories for readers continues to be produced.

Copyright is the foundation on which cultural industries are built, and we also encourage the government to conduct a comprehensive review of the *Copyright Modernization Act* in 2017, as mandated by law. Recently, Access Copyright alerted Canadian publishers to a fifty-five per cent drop in royalties compared to last year. This significant reduction in revenue for rights-holders is directly

¹ The State of Digital Publishing in Canada, 2015. BookNet Canada.

did not find any entries for your table of contents. attributable to the broad interpretation of ‘fair-dealing’ adopted by educational institutions following the introduction of the *Copyright Modernization Act*.

- C. Meeting the challenges of promoting Canadian creativity in the digital world and using Canadian content to promote a strong democracy

Because Canadian publishers were pro-active in entering the digital book market and the Department of Canadian Heritage and many provincial funders supported these efforts, Canadian citizens have access to a broad range of ebooks from across the country. However, it is not always easy for Canadian readers to find Canadian books when distribution channels are dominated by US firms with a focus on their home market. More needs to be done to improve title discoverability both through retail channels and libraries.

It must also be recognized that not all Canadian communities have access to broadband wifi and that focussing exclusively on digital content will further marginalize these communities.

- D. Supporting Canada’s writing, reading and publishing industry to create an ecosystem that thrives

Investment by the Department in organizations like Book Net Canada, 49th Shelf and eBOUND have been critical to the Canadian industry by providing essential sales information and access to digital markets beyond the reach of many independent publishers. Canadian publishers, and their books, continue to face challenges in finding their audience as online book retailers like Amazon, and public library catalogues powered by OverDrive dominate the market and do very little to promote Canadian content. eBOUND has partnered with BookNet Canada and the Canadian Urban Library Council to pilot a recommendation engine called *Check it Out* for use in public libraries but further investment and development are needed to bring Check it Out to more libraries across Canada.

The network of national and regional publishing associations supported by the Department is a very effective part of the ecosystem that supports Canadian authors and publishers and is responsible for much of the innovation in our industry. Projects like eBOUND’s *Check it Out*, the Book Publishers’ Association of Alberta’s partnership with the province of Alberta to ensure ebooks produced by their members are included in libraries across the province or the Atlantic Publishers’ Marketing Association’s similar project with provincial libraries and ebooks are all examples of how these organizations work to create a thriving ecosystem for Canadian authors and readers. Most of these associations are supported through the Support for Organizations component of the Canada Book Fund and this component has for many years been heavily over-subscribed. Also, while investment in these organizations is tied to project activity and is allocated in one or two-year agreements, the work of some organizations, such as BookNet and eBOUND is ongoing. These technology projects must keep pace with changes in technology affecting the industry and consequently must continuously update their systems. Greater flexibility in grants and contributions to associations would better sustain the organizations that support the

creators and cultural businesses responsible for great Canadian content – and would strengthen our sector’s ability to innovate.

E. Conclusion

Continued success for Canadian digital content will depend on maintaining, building on, and adapting the infrastructure that supports its production and distribution. eBOUND Canada looks forward to working with Canadian Heritage to build on past successes and ensure that ebooks from Canadian authors are available to readers in Canada and around the world.